

Watershed planning and the Grays-Elochoman, Cowlitz Planning Unit

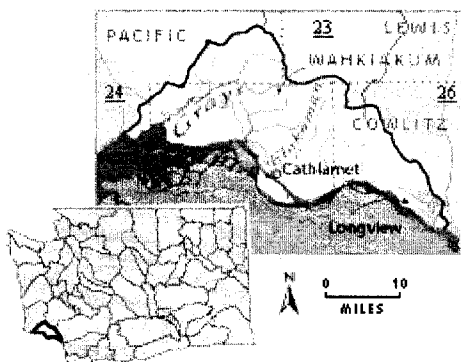
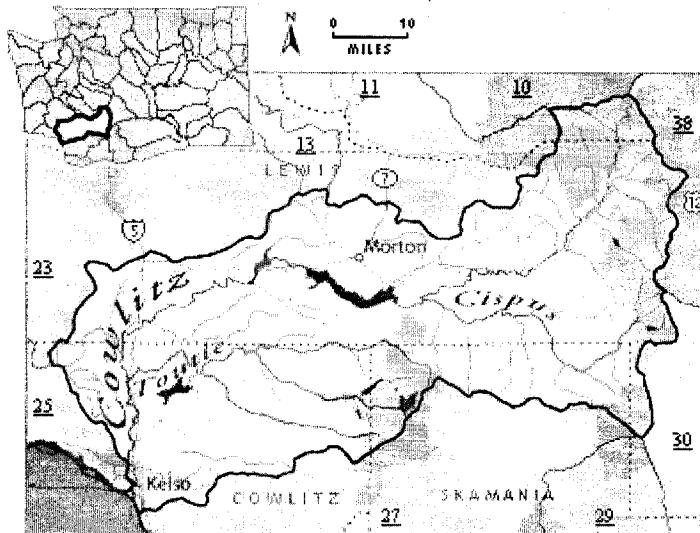
The Water Resources Inventory Areas (WRIAs) 25 and 26 Planning Unit was formed in 1999, and continues to meet on a monthly basis. The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board was selected to serve as the lead agency, to receive and manage State grant money on behalf of the Planning Unit, and provide staffing and facilitation throughout the planning process.

The Grays-Elochoman and Cowlitz Watershed Plan addresses a range of issues related to water resources in WRIAs 25 and 26, including water supply, stream flow management, water quality, and fish habitat. It reviews alternative approaches for managing water resources in the area and recommends selected strategies for implementation.

In July 2006, county officials in Wahkiakum, Lewis, Cowlitz and Skamania counties approved the Watershed Plan, which included recommendations for instream flows.

- Grays-Elochoman and Cowlitz Watershed Planning (WRIA 25/26) - Ecology Watershed Planning Information

Overview of the basins



Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs) 25 and 26 are located in southwest Washington State, and overlap significant parts of Lewis, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties. Smaller portions of Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, and Yakima Counties are also included.

A variety of needs must be met by surface and ground waters in this region of the state. This is primarily due to the wide range of land uses that span from public and private resource lands to rural mixed use lands to suburban and urban lands.

Future water demands are expected to come from a combination of domestic growth and economic transition. The population in these basins is projected to increase by 47 percent from year 2000 to 2020, and economic development is increasing in the small industrial and commercial sectors.

Although neither of these watersheds are identified as one of the 16 most flow-critical basins in Washington, they are still of great public importance and require considerable protection. Streams within these watersheds provide spawning and rearing habitat for several fish species that have recently been listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. In most areas, the stream flow that supports these species is severely limited during summer months.

The region's rivers, streams, and lakes also

offer fishing, boating and other recreational opportunities and natural beauty for residents and visitors to the area.
